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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35, as amended), the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this information collection for which the Agency intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by (INSERT DATE 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas P. Dickson, Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, USDA Rural Development, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 5164 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 690-4492. Fax: (202) 720-8435.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB as a revision to an existing collection. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency’s estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Thomas P. Dickson, Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, Room 5164, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250–1522. Fax: (202) 720–8435.

Title: 7 CFR Part 1728, Electric Standards and Specifications for Materials and Construction.

OMB Control Number: 0572–0131.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: RUS provides loans and loan guarantees in accordance with the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, 7 U.S.C. 901 et seq., as amended, (RE Act). Section 4 of the RE Act requires that the Agency make or guarantee a loan only if there is reasonable assurance that the loan, together with all outstanding loans and obligations of the Borrower, will be repaid in full within the time agreed. In order to facilitate the programmatic interests of the RE Act and, in order to assure that loans made or guaranteed by the Agency are adequately secure, RUS, as a secured lender, has established certain standards and specifications for materials, equipment, and the construction of electric systems. The use of standards and specifications for materials, equipment and construction units helps assure the Agency that: (1) Appropriate standards and specifications are maintained; (2) RUS loan security is not adversely affected, and; (3) Loan and loan guarantee funds are used effectively and for the intended purposes. The regulation, 7 CFR part 1728, establishes Agency policy that materials and equipment purchased by RUS Electric Borrowers or accepted as contractor-furnished material must conform to Agency standards and specifications where established and, if included in RUS Publication IP 202-1, "List of Materials Acceptable for Use on Systems of Agency Electrification Borrowers" (List of Materials), must be selected from that list or must have received technical acceptance from RUS.

Estimate of Burden: This collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per response.

Respondents: Business or other for-profits.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 38.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.63.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,000 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Rebecca Hunt, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 205-3660, Fax: (202) 720-8435.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 18, 2015.

Brandon McBride

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service

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